

**Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**4016 West Broad Street**  
**Richmond, Virginia 23230**  
**May 19, 2008**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**Present:** James W. Hazel, Board Chairman, John W. Montgomery, Committee Chairman, Charles Yates and Ward Burton; **Director:** Robert “Bob” Duncan; **Staff:** Gary Martel, Rick Busch, Bob Ellis, David Whitehurst, Charlie Sledd, Ray Davis, James Adams; **Guest:** Tom Guess and Mike Spears.

Mr. Montgomery welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. Mr. Montgomery called upon Mr. Duncan to make a few announcements. Mr. Duncan announced that Mr. Bob Ellis is the new Wildlife Division Director. Mr. Duncan thanked Mr. Ellis and Mr. Rick Busch for taking on additional job duties during the vacancy of the division director’s position.

Mr. Charlie Sledd introduced the new Boating Safety Education Coordinator, Mr. Tom Guess. Mr. Guess will begin his new duties with the agency on June 25, 2008.

**Update on Advertised Wildlife Regulations-Electronic Ignitions:** Mr. Bob Ellis provided the committee with an update on the advertised Wildlife Regulations-Electronic Ignitions. The proposed final regulation was posted to the web site for public comment and approximately 67 comments were received. These comments will be mailed to the Board for their review. During the June Board Meeting, the staff will make the final recommendation to the Board that they adopt this regulation as proposed.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Ellis for his report.

**Update on Hunting with Hounds Study:** Mr. Rick Busch provided the committee with an update on the Hunting with Hounds Study. Mr. Busch stated during the April 15<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee meeting, the Technical Advisory committee presented different draft chapters of the technical report. The Advisory Committee is still trying to identify the real issues and begin to move forward. The Hound Study Participatory Process is a deliberative process and at some point a completed report will be finished. Two new members have been added to the Advisory Committee. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in Charlottesville on May 20, 2008. The final report presented to the Board will identify key issues with proposed solutions and recommendations for the issues identified. The Wildlife and Boat Committee requested Chairman Hazel to include this presentation during the June Board Meeting.

The Wildlife and Boat Committee requested the Stakeholders who participated in the Hound Hunting Study be recognized by the Agency for their work in putting this report together at the October Board Meeting.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Busch for his report.

**Update on the Governor's Climate Change Commission:** Mr. David Whitehurst provided the Committee with an update on the Governor's Climate Change Commission activities. As of this date, four meetings have been held. During the April 27, 2008 meeting, the Commission heard presentations on how wildlife, habitats, and landscapes are likely to be impacted by climate change. Presentations were made on the following topics: predicted impacts of climate change on coastal Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay (by Dr. James Bauer, Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)); ecosystems and living resources (by Dr. Emmett Duffy, VIMS); predicted climate change impacts to agriculture forests and wildlife habitats (by Dr. Herman Shugart, UVA); and impacts on fisheries and wildlife (by Dr. Doug Inkley, National Wildlife Federation). Highlights of the presentations included the fact that all habitats (marine, aquatic, and terrestrial) will be affected. A wide array of wildlife species will also be impacted, the degree to which will be dictated, in part, by current levels of imperilment; speed of climate change; and the ability of plants and animals to migrate. Some of the species will be extirpated from Virginia as their habitats shift to higher elevations and latitudes; some will expand their ranges into Virginia and some will even become extinct as their habitat disappears. A few of the specific wildlife predictions are that the varieties of songbirds that breed in Virginia could decline by 37%; Virginia's Brook Trout populations could decline by 40% to 100% (by 2009) due to increasing water temperatures; and waterfowl populations in the Chesapeake Bay will decline due to loss of breeding habitats in northern great plains, loss of submerged vegetation in the Bay, and warmer temperatures further north. It is anticipated that these changes will have an impact on all of the wildlife programs in Virginia. Furthermore, these predictions and changes do not account for any new invasive species nor the expanded distributions of current invasive species.

Upcoming Commission meetings are scheduled for June, August, September and November. At the June meeting, the Commission will hear presentations on potential adaptation strategies, including wildlife and habitats. At the August and September meetings, the Commission members will evaluate and discuss strategies and recommendations prepared by the group of state agency staffers ("Kitchen Cabinet"). At its final meeting in November, the Commission will finalize the recommendations and review the draft report to Governor Kaine.

The agency has initiated an effort with the National Wildlife Federation and the Virginia Conservation Network to incorporate these expected climate changes into its efforts in conserving wildlife, including the implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan. Representatives from Fisheries, Wildlife and Wildlife Diversity are compiling information and will make it available to the Commission.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Whitehurst for his report.

**Update on the Quail Action Plan:** Mr. Ellis gave an update on the Quail Action Plan. Since the April Board Meeting, Mr. Gary Norman and Mr. Mark Puckett of the Wildlife Division have been actively working to address the resolution developed by the Quail Focus Group and adopted by the Board. A survey was mailed to 5000 landowners to assess their efforts in quail habitat management. A draft Quail Action Plan is being

developed by staff and ready for the focus group to review in June and the final product should be ready for the Board to review in July. A meeting was held with major land management organizations and they also received a copy of the draft plan. The meeting was attended by federal, state and non-governmental organizations. During the meeting, Mr. Duncan announced the formation of the Virginia Quail Council comprised of these federal, state and non-governmental organizations. The representatives attending the meeting were able to sign onto a MOA indicating their support for the Quail Plan and habitat management. Signatures on the MOA were Mr. Bob Duncan, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Mr. Keith Toler, Virginia State Council, Quail Unlimited; Mr. J. Hudson Reese; Mr. Lanny Wolfolk, Chairman, Central Virginia Quail Unlimited; Mr. John Carroll, Department of Forestry and Mr. Stephen Capel, Appalachian Mountains Woodstock Initiative. Additional signatures for the MOA are expected in the near future. Mr. Hazel said he was please with the results of this meeting and a great discussion was held by all. Mr. Hazel thanked everyone for their efforts.

Mr. Ellis said they are working with the agency webmaster to develop a web page devoted to the bobwhite quail and habitat management.

An article on quail and quail habitat management will be included in the October 2008 edition of the *Virginia Wildlife Magazine*.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Ellis for his report.

**Update on Fisheries Division Capital Projects:** Mr. Gary Martel provided the committee with an update on the Fisheries Division Capital Projects. The Coursey Springs renovation is approximately \$11.1 million. Mr. Martel is working with the purchasing division to identify cost saving measures in the final award of the bid for project work. Work is tentatively scheduled to begin in June 2008 and will be completed approximately in the winter of 2009. The Committee requested this as an agenda item for the June Board meeting.

Mr. Martel reported that Laurel Bed Lake is currently in the process of being drained and will not be completed by July. Mr. Martel stated they are negotiating the cost of the Coursey Springs Hatchery project in looking for other funding to make the repairs to Laurel Bed Lake that will cost approximately \$1-2million.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Martel for his presentation.

**Mallard Release Areas – Current and Future Status:** Mr. Ellis introduced his staff and also Mr. Mike Spears, General Manager at Upper Brandon Plantation. Currently, there are four managed mallard release areas. Three of these areas are managed collectively as one area located on the Eastern Shore and the fourth one is Upper Brandon. Last year, revisions were made to the mallard release area applications. Mr. Ellis indicated one of the revisions was an agreed upon harvest rate target of 60%. Harvest rates this past year were much lower than the 60% target rate ranging from 17.2% to 42.6%. Due to the lower rates achieved this past year owners have been notified

of a 25% reduction in the number of mallards released on the areas for this year. The staff is recommending that the moratorium remains on issuing any additional permits for new mallard release areas.

Mr. Mike Spears answered questions from the Committee on his experience in working with the mallard release area program.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Ellis for his report.

**Review Status of Sunday Hunting Issue:** The Committee and staff held a brief discussion on Sunday Hunting and it was decided to have this as an agenda item for the June 5<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting for further discussion.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Montgomery called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2008 meeting. **Mr. Yates made the following motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the minutes of the March 17, 2008 meeting be approved as submitted. Motion Seconded by Mr. Burton. Ayes: Montgomery, Yates and Burton.**

Mr. Montgomery announced the next committee meeting would be held on June 5, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth B. Drewery  
Board Secretary